

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Blackridge Strategy**

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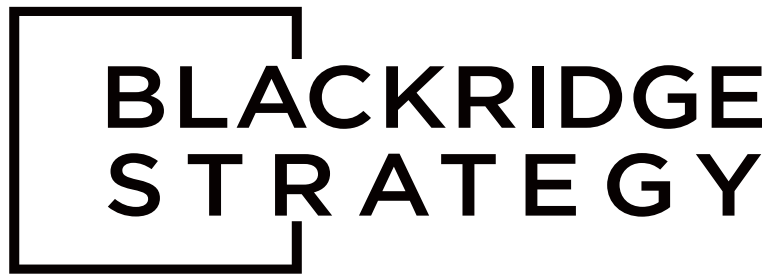
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Tuesday, June 4 2019



**BLACKRIDGE STRATEGY RESPONDS TO FALSE ALLEGATIONS  
BY THE MEDIA, POLITICIANS**

**Additional Background:**

**About the Conflict of Interest with Susan Toth:**

Susan Toth was appointed to the London Police Services Board by former Councillor Virginia Ridley and Ward 5 Councillor Maureen Cassidy. Susan Toth is now serving as their attorney. Questions should be raised as to whether this constitutes a conflict of interest and how Maureen Cassidy can objectively decide on the upcoming police services budget or other matters related to the Police Services Board. If Susan Toth receives an income from the City of London for being on the Police Services Board has she already breached the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act?

**About Cassidy's Sexual Affair**

Ward 5 Councillor and former Deputy Mayor Maureen Cassidy admitted to having a sexual affair with then-Mayor Matt Brown on June 16, 2016. The integrity commissioner published a five (5) page report that concluded she violated three (3) separate areas of the City Council Code of Conduct:

Members are expected to perform their duties in office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny.

A member shall not engage in any activity, financial or otherwise, which is incompatible with the ethical discharge of his or her official duties in the public interest.

[The members shall not] place themselves in a position of obligation to any person or organization which might reasonably benefit from special consideration or may seek preferential treatment.

Source:

<https://www.london.ca/newsroom/Pages/Integrity-Commissioner-Report.aspx>

### **About Ridley and Cassidy's Support for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

Both former Ward 10 Councillor Virginia Ridley and Ward 5 Councillor Maureen Cassidy voted in favour of Bus Rapid Transit. The project was estimated to cost \$500 million.

The results of a poll commissioned by the London Free Press on October 15, 2018 showed that opposition to Bus Rapid Transit was 2:1.

Campaign Research, a Toronto-based public opinion firm, completed in August 2018, put support for the \$500-million BRT plan at 16%.

A Forum Research poll on May 2017, showed that 67% of Londoners were opposed to BRT.

The vast majority of Londoners voted for an anti-BRT mayoral candidate including Mayor Ed Holder who expressed strong opposition to the plan during his campaign.

Source:

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=fa79fe07-d321-4d71-b9bd-3c04050d9012&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English>

<https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/free-press-forum-poll-opposition-to-brt-running-two-to-one>

### **About Ridley and Cassidy's Support for Making London a 'Sanctuary City'**

Both former Councillor Virginia Ridley and Maureen Cassidy voted to make London a 'Sanctuary City' safe-haven for illegal migrants to settle. A sanctuary city gives illegal immigrants access to municipal services such as social and affordable housing, transportation, public health, and other discretionary benefits without fear. Sanctuary Cities typically have a policy to restrict local police from enforcing federal immigration laws.

According to the Government of Canada, there are a number of reasons you can be found inadmissible, denied a visa or refused entry to Canada such as:

1. Security
2. Human or international rights violations
3. Criminality
4. Organized criminality
5. Health grounds
6. Financial reasons
7. Misrepresentation or misinformation (i.e not being truthful)
8. Non-compliance with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
9. Having an inadmissible family member

Motion: That the following actions be taken in response to the President of the United States of America's executive order to ban individuals and families from Syria, Iran, Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Somalia from entering the United States of America:

a) the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to consult with the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee (DIAAC) and the community stakeholders who are working on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and report back at a future meeting of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee with the appropriate arrangements for the City of London to become a Sanctuary City where residents can expect access to service without fear;

Source:

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=d713d929-38fe-4e93-8c88-ac3f36d943af&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English>

### **About Ridley and Cassidy's Support for Banning Free Speech**

Both former Councillor Virginia Ridley and Maureen Cassidy voted to ban the right to free speech for those whose ideologies are contrary to the City of London.

Andrew Sancton, the former head of Western University's local government program and a highly respected academic in Canada said council's vagueness could have serious consequences. "This is extremely dangerous because it looks like it's almost limitless in its application, and it could cause all kinds of trouble," Sancton said.



Constitutional expert and Professor at the University of Waterloo, Emmett Macfarlane, has said that any bylaw using language similar to the council motion wouldn't withstand a constitutional challenge. "(It) would, in my view, fall clearly offside with the Charter of Rights and freedom of expression guarantees," he said.

"It's not to say that there are no limits whatsoever that can be placed on expression, but if you have such broad and vague and ambiguous language, you're going to run into serious trouble, I think."

"Motion: Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to prepare a council policy to confirm the prohibition of activities of organizations whose ideologies are contrary to the City of London in civic spaces and/or city-owned facilities and spaces."

Sources:

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=32abb11b-dd40-4fae-b0e9-ebe11938a9e5&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English>

<https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/put-together-in-haste-city-staff-tell-politicians-to-drop-anti-hate-proposal>

<https://lfpres.com/2017/08/25/cornies-city-overreaching-in-bid-to-contain-racism/wcm/b9016007-7eb2-04e9-91ef-191aed4947ac>

<https://www.change.org/p/city-council-stop-the-war-on-free-speech-in-london-ontario>

<https://lfpres.com/2017/09/29/london-risks-legal-firefight-over-hate-ban-expert-warns/wcm/aee79d0a-dc5a-177f-6691-8e7e875cac07>

<https://lfpres.com/2017/08/23/racism-london-councils-stand-against-racism-hard-to-enforce/wcm/45116d39-47f9-98ff-3fe4-85cd53fd83a4>

### **About Ridley's Spending**

Councillor Ridley filed thousands of dollars in blatantly inappropriate and unnecessary expenses on the taxpayer's dime, such as exorbitant fuel, parking, and home internet bills; These raised questions and concerns.

Source:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3246224/city-of-london-releases-2016-councillor-expense-reports/>

<https://lfpress.com/2016/02/07/london-city-council-expenses-for-2015-released/wcm/f9f4e8fc-7690-8972-0195-f7dbbd5f4bd8>

<https://www.london.ca/city-hall/city-council/Documents/2017-Councillors-Expenses.pdf>

<https://lfpress.com/2017/02/13/london-councillors-home-internet-expenses-spark-queries/wcm/99822d4c-bd92-b02d-8ea7-40b151991aa8>

### **Ridley's Poor Judgement**

Media reported that City Councillor Virginia Ridley brought her child to a 9-hour budget meeting at City Hall, which the website implied was arguably abusive. Ridley responded by saying that she is open to questions, concerns, and comments that are critical.

A Letter to the Editor published in the London Free Press stated the following about the incident:

Titled: City hall not a nursery

"It's intolerable and unacceptable Coun. Virginia Ridley found it necessary to bring her son to a London budget meeting. When dealing with taxpayer dollars, any distraction that could impact decisions on the application of taxpayer dollars is unacceptable. It was not fair to expect this child to sit for an extended period of time regardless of what entertainment he had at his disposal. Ridley was well aware of the Saturday budget meeting, hence alternate arrangements could have been made — no excuses. City of London is a business not a boutique nursery."

Source:

<https://lfpress.com/2016/03/08/letters-to-the-editor-march-9/wcm/a2eb9931-fc62-5648-877c-0dbf7cd50869>

<https://lfpress.com/2016/03/06/1-heroic-kid-1-digital-device-9-boring-hours/wcm/8ca650c0-255d-b838-6f31-5d4a2994021b>



### **Blackridge Strategy's Contractual Obligations**

Blackridge Strategy entered into binding, contractual campaign service agreements with Ward 5 Candidate Randy Warden and Ward 10 Candidate (now City Councillor) Paul van Meerbergen during the 2018 municipal election.

### **About Blackridge**

Blackridge Strategy is a public affairs firm in London, Ontario incorporated and exclusively owned by Amir Farahi and Jake Skinner.

### **Blackridge Strategy Employs, Supports, and Elects Women**

Blackridge Strategy takes pride in being an equal opportunity employer and client service company. Furthermore, Blackridge Strategy has hired employees from a diverse set of cultural backgrounds, religions, creeds, and LGBTQ2 identities. We are proud to have served and delivered electoral wins for strong female candidates in London as well as across Ontario and Canada.

### **About Amir Farahi**

Amir Farahi is a 50% owner and Principal at Blackridge Strategy.

### **About Jake Skinner**

Jake Skinner is a 50% owner and Principal at Blackridge Strategy. He is also an elected Thames Valley District School Board Trustee.

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